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# The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of  
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days  
foretold by Christ

**"Take heed ye be not deceived"**

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## At the Table of the Lord

“AS IT HAD BEEN THE FACE OF AN ANGEL”

**I**N OUR DAILY portion, we often find there is a particular point or a particular person, especially standing out to impress the mind as we are privileged to feed upon the Word of God. Such is the case this morning, in Acts 6, where we have read of Stephen, being chosen to assist the twelve apostles in caring for the everyday work of the Truth while the twelve gave themselves, verse 4 :

“ . . . continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

Stephen and the other six with him were not chosen casually or haphazardly, for the instructions were, verse 3 :

“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

The qualifications were : of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. “Honest report” comes from a root meaning “to be a witness,” those able to bear witness. How ? by their living, being held in reputation as ready to witness for Jesus, for God. “Full of the Holy Spirit” : those chosen were especially blessed, because of their witnessing, for the Spirit of God was with them to help as they evidenced obedience to their God.

The disciples, in obedience to the apostles’ injunction, chose carefully. Verse 5 tells us :

“ . . . the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit . . . ”

As evidence of Stephen’s spirit, we read, verse 8 :

“ . . . Stephen, full of faith, and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.”

God was with Stephen in the work that was his, granting the power to do miracles. What a faithful man he must have been, pleasing to God, for God witnessed by these miracles that this man was His.

The Spirit confirms this is so, for we read in verse 15 how in the midst of persecution and trial “all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the *face of an angel*.” What a faithful witness Stephen must have been ! As his enemies looked upon him, they couldn’t help but be impressed by his face or his presence, as we find the word is sometimes used. What was there about his face which so affected his adversaries ? Due to the

dire circumstances in which Stephen found himself, his face could have been angry because he was falsely accused ; it could have been filled with fear for he would know what was to happen to him at the hands of the elders and the scribes ; it could have been a scornful face, despising his unjust and unheeding adversaries. But, no, we are told it was like "*the face of an angel.*" Let us stop and think what a testimony this is of the man and his countenance. We know that an angel is a messenger—a messenger of God, sent to do His particular work. Stephen's face must have exhibited his devotion and awareness of the privilege. It was not angry, scornful, or fearful, but rather reflected the faith, the spirit of trust and submission which was in his heart. Can we visualise our brother's face ? It may be a help for us, brethren and sisters, as we struggle in our small way to be messengers of God, witnessing to His Truth. Were our circumstances as crucial, as frustrating, and as terrifying, would we not be inclined to let the natural feelings of the flesh appear on our countenance ; anger, resentment, hurt, or dread ? How hard it is, brethren and sisters, to be as Stephen, our faces reflecting what *must* be in our heart—the faith, the spirit of the Truth, the privilege we know as we strive truly to be His messenger. Yet, if we are to be such, our faces must reflect that love of God from within.

**"THAT THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS"**

This face is seen, not just in Stephen, but in all those who are struggling truly to be His messengers, finding themselves in difficulties because of it. We think of Peter and John of whom we have recently read, Acts 4 : 13, where they were questioned after being put in prison :

" . . . when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled and they took knowledge of them, *that they had been with Jesus.*"

It was apparently obvious to all who looked upon Peter and John that they belonged to Jesus, that they were His disciples. How could this be discerned ? By their boldness, confidence, faith ; by their countenances reflecting the spirit of Christ, witnessing that they unquestionably were of Jesus, and that His ways were growing in them. Again, brethren and sisters, do we show by our countenance that we belong to Jesus ? Are we, as Peter and John, bold in the face of the adversary ? Boldness is not a quality normally associated with those who belong to Jesus ; but when we look at the word, we find it means to *speak all*. Peter and John had the faith, the

power of the Truth strong enough in them to speak all that was in their hearts, to confound those who looked for learned, wise men. Here were two who in the eyes of their adversaries were ignorant, unlearned ; but who could speak with boldness, yet with humility, with conviction, making it plain that “they had been with Jesus,” for they were reflecting His spirit even though it did put them in danger of their lives.

We read of another faithful man of God whose face was like that of an angel, in Exodus 34 : 29-30 :

“ . . . when *Moses* came down from Mt. Sinai . . . (he) wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone . . . ”

Moses was an angel of God, His appointment to Israel ; and as a consequence, his face revealed it. The people were afraid when they saw his face and so, verse 33 tells us :

“ . . . till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face.”

How Moses stood out, as a messenger of God, because the Spirit of God was with him, and his face reflected the presence of the Spirit within ! As with Stephen, many in Israel did not receive his message, indeed were afraid of the spirit shining forth as he came from speaking with God.

Such, then, was the face of Stephen as he stood before the council, as he faithfully witnessed to them concerning the Truth and their sin in crucifying Messiah. There was no fear of what might happen to him, because Stephen was full of faith, full of the Holy Spirit, both of which reflected in his countenance. Because of his faithful witness, he was stoned, Acts 7 : 58 :

“ . . . (they) cast him out of the city, and stoned him ; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.”

This same young man later spoke of this tragic event, Acts 20 : 20:

“ . . . when the blood of thy martyr (witness) Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.”

Paul remembered Stephen ; his conscience troubled him. Could it be because of the face of Stephen appearing as the face of an angel ? As Paul was touched of the Holy Spirit, did he remember that face ? We remember Acts 9 : 5 when Paul asked :

“ . . . Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest : *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*”

Was the face of Stephen one of the pricks, the goads which forced Paul toward the right way—the way of God ?

Does the example of Stephen help us, then, brethren and sisters— in our struggle to live in a way which is more pleasing to God ? Is it not true that it is relatively easy to allow our face to shine when things are going well, to reflect the faith and power of God that we believe and hope is there ? It is when difficulties arise and press upon us that truly we are tested. Will our faces continue to be, in a measure, like that of Stephen ? Remember his circumstances were most difficult to bear. He was falsely accused : yet, as he was condemned by the council, and died under the stones of his accusers, his spirit shined forth for all to see, all through this fiery trial. Because of his steadfastness, he was helped to endure the trial, Acts 7 : 55-56 :

“But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

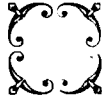
What an incredible reassurance to our brother ! What a powerful sign of God's presence ! Why was he so helped ? Was it because he recognised the need for His help, and a hope in his sore trial, that he sought the strength to witness faithfully, that his face might continue to reflect one who was indeed a messenger of God ? With God's help, Stephen was enabled to endure the stoning and could die before his false accusers, still reflecting the spirit of the Truth as he said, “ . . . Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” It is the most difficult thing to forgive, to pray for God's forgiveness where there has been hurt done ; yet, Stephen was able to rise above his own injury, to pray that God might forgive them for their fault. Among those for whom he prayed was Paul. Did he not truly reflect the spirit of Christ ? Was he not a faithful messenger ? Can we see more clearly how his face was as it had been the face of an angel ? So Stephen died, condemned by his judges ; but blessed of God. We may think it was a dreadful way to die, and it was indeed ; but by his death, he gave glory. Stephen's name means “crown” ; and do we not feel that Stephen will be among those who are crowned as Victors when Jesus Christ returns to judge all those who have desired to be His faithful messengers ?

Can we, then, brethren and sisters, find help for the work God has placed upon us ? Stephen died, but his death conveyed his message

more strongly than any of his words could have done. He lived and died as a messenger ; and by his message, his example, his countenance, those of a sensitive spirit, such as Paul were impressed, pricked, and so moved to honour God.

What a responsibility is ours, brethren and sisters, if we are his angels. Let us pray that, in this responsibility, our faces *and* our hearts reflect some of that which was in Stephen's, our brother.

J. A. DeF.



## The Lamentations of Jeremiah

**A**NYONE PASSING the Stowell Memorial Church which occupies a prominent place at the junction of two major roads in Salford, Manchester's twin city, is presented with the phrase which appears so eloquently in verse 12 of Lamentations Ch. 1.

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ?”

Those in charge of the Stowell Church have gone beyond the poster stage, and had this phrase sign-written upon a fairly elaborate wooden hoarding. It has stood there in silent witness for many years, but who among men understand ?

“IS IT NOTHING TO YOU ALL YE THAT PASS BY ?”

On the 9th day of the 5th month, i.e. the month Ab which is our August, the book of Lamentations is read on that Jewish Fast day even to the present time.

According to Jewish tradition, the Babylonians on the Ninth of Ab 586 BC broke into the temple of Solomon and sacked it. Six hundred and fifty years later, on the same date, the Romans destroyed the second Temple. Hence the Jews mark the Ninth of Ab by a fast.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah comprise five chapters and the Jews equate this division with the five great calamities which befell their nation. They are listed as :

1. The return of the twelve Spies and the decree of forty years wandering in the wilderness because of their rebellion.
2. The destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar.
3. The destruction of the second temple by the Romans under Titus Vespasian.
4. The taking of Bether by the Romans under Hadrian, when 580,000 Jews were slain.
5. The ploughing of Zion like a field in fulfilment of Micah 3 : 12.

This of course is tradition ; though undoubtedly these great and terrible calamities took place. But the remarkable thing about the book of Lamentations is the way this book is arranged in the original text. The first two chapters consist of twenty-two verses ; each verse in the original Hebrew commencing with a consecutive letter of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The third chapter, with its 66 verses, has each three verses prefixed with consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet's 22 letters (in the original).

The fourth chapter is again 22 verses commencing with the letters of the alphabet. The fifth chapter, which is a prayer and an appeal, is not an alphabet chapter in the specific sense, but again is divided into 22 verses, the number of the letters of the alphabet. What is the message ?

Jesus was and is the Alpha and the Omega. The beginning and the end. All the writings of God comprehend Him. We can hear His cry, in the spirit of the Lamentations, when He wept over Jerusalem :

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

*“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ?”* is nothing to the world at large, but it is something to those who know His Truth. The hope of Israel is bound up in Zion ; and so our Anthem 20 commences *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem . . .”*

Zion now begins to lift up its head in troublous times. A time when distress has not only afflicted the natural Jew, but also the called of the gentiles, who have been grafted into the good tree, contrary to nature.

Can we stand with Jeremiah and therefore retain the favour and protection of the good God of Heaven in these times ? We can, if we capture the spirit of what is recorded :

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning : great is thy faithfulness.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul ; therefore will I hope in Him.” (Lam. 3 : 22-24).

It is God who has established Zion as a witness of His purpose, giving hope, and a stay, to the “poor” of His people.

Lamentations there might be now in these times of distress, but there is another side to the story ; life is not all anguish for the people of God. Hence the alphabet message in another part of scripture through Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible. The Psalm speaks of blessing, delight and mercy through His word, which is a lamp and a light, a great blessing in time of trouble, leading on to that great day of victory and peace, through the Son of God, the Word made flesh.

D.L.



## “Lord, are there few that be saved”

**T**HE DOCTRINES OF the “Christian” churches leave little in minds of their adherents to be desired, as the Truth should be, “with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind”, which Jesus taught as being the first and greatest commandment. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour”. Could any-one love a God they neither know nor understand? Deep in the hearts of a great number of people there is the frustrating knowledge that within them is a spiritual vacuum because of their lack of conviction or assurance that there *is* a God in Heaven who hears prayer: who can be known; and not only known but loved as a Father who is above, and transcends all earthly fathers.

The knowledge of God so essential to the seeking heart, has been obscured from the beginning by the “wise” of this world who have changed His Laws added to and taken away from His Word (Rev. 22 : 19), so that if one in the churches were to set out to find the Scriptural authority for *any* doctrine of Christendom on his own, or through the help of his Minister, he or she would soon be sadly disillusioned.

“Who is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

(1 Cor. 1 : 20-21).

But God’s wisdom does not please men, nor will they believe the preaching of Christ, the Son of God :

### THE NARROW WAY TO LIFE

“Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Do the great majority of people on the earth today believe these words of Jesus? That, of the endless and countless numbers who have lived and died, only a few will see Life; do they believe that it is true of this generation that only a “handful” will be saved? or do they care? (Gen. 7 : 11-24. Luke 17 : 26-30). A discerning mind may ask the question, concerning these two roads of which Jesus spoke, “Which am I taking?” For it is not difficult to see which road the world is taking today, or what occupies their hearts and

thoughts. A few may still pay lip service to God in a religious observance which is *their* way, but a few seek earnestly the paths of righteousness, or *God's* way.

“The Lord looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy. there is none that doeth good, no not one” (Ps. 14 : 2-3).

In writing to the Romans (Chapt. 3) Paul quotes this psalm and asks “Are we better than they ?” meaning that in Adam *all* flesh is corrupt, both Jew and Gentile, and worthy only of death. To escape the destruction that is the end of all flesh, God has provided a way in Christ, through obedience to His commandments.

“For the time is come that the judgment must begin at the House of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God ?”

(1 Peter 4 : 7).

We cannot escape from the fact that the flesh hates all things Spiritual, as God foresaw that it should. Paul writes :

“I delight in the law of God after the inward man but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom. 7).

#### THE BROAD WAY

To ease the discomfort of the chastening of God, men changed His laws

“Turning away their ears from the Truth and turning them into fables . . . for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . .” (2 Tim. 4 : 3-4).

The doctrines of men *are* fables ; they themselves are false witness of the Truth, *neither do they agree together*. The antagonism between the flesh and the Spirit is the ancient decree of God that “*enmity*” would be put between the seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent. There can be no compromise between Light and Darkness, and “Christ is not divided”. Whom God calls, he commands to “come out and be separate, and I will be a Father unto you”. Men have however always turned from God’s law, believing they could hide from His Spirit, and in so doing *have cast away all hope of eternal life in His Kingdom on earth*.

How easy it is for the flesh to consider it walks uprightly and innocently before God because it has not transgressed the so-called major commandments of murder, theft or adultery. Jesus taught

that not only the acts, but even the thoughts of hatred, envy and lust, if indulged in, debar forever the hope of immortality. Yet clergy and laity alike soak up daily the outpourings of television which, we read, descends week by week to ever greater depths of degradation and violence.

“What shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God ?” What indeed ! “*For he that is the friend of the world is the enemy of God!*”, the apostle James has said. Let there be no mistake: when Jesus said that few would be saved, he *meant* few, and the examples he quoted of Noah and Lot give great emphasis to his words recorded in Luke ch. 18 : 8.

“Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth.

As the outlook of the peoples of the earth darkens, so the “vision” of the Truth speaks more clearly. The Jew returning to his homeland and apparently bringing on his own head isolation from the Nations ; the wrath of the Northern power which, according to the will of God (Ezek. 38 etc.) shall be the instrument to bring Israel to its knees and near annihilation, at which time God will intervene to save His people, and receive their acknowledgement of Christ as their Messiah and Lord.

“And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel as a cloud to cover the land ; it shall be in the latter days and I will bring thee against my land that the Nations may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee O Gog before their eyes”     (Ezek. 38 : 16).

The time is short now ; how vital that we know and obey the commandments of the Lord Jesus, for only such will be received when he comes. How many will there be then ? Jesus has told us, has he not—very few ! But that small body is intact today ; bound together in unity and love and hope.

In spurning the Truth as it is in Christ, because of the “narrow” way which he preached, and turning to the seductive fables of Christendom’s broad way, which promise a false hope (of Heaven) ; together with all the enjoyment of the world and the flesh, man has (like the Jew) brought on himself condemnation and the judgment of God which must surely succeed the “sorrows” of this present time.

J.P.



## “The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World”

1974

“... there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.” (Mark 13 : 18).

**T**HE SORROWS REFERRED to by the Lord Jesus are as the pains of a woman in travail. This term brings to remembrance that apposite phrase used to describe world conditions :

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” (Romans 8 : 22).

Following the coup in Chile has come the downfall of yet another government in Greece. Holiday makers heading for Greece have been urged by the British Foreign Office to postpone visits until the situation clears. Troubles there certainly are ; as the Lord Jesus predicted. But also famines.

The world has been blind ; immersed in its ambitions it has suddenly been made to realise that it has been too profligate, and uncaring about the future. On a small scale, ambition by some to secure weekend cottages by the sea or in the country have accelerated the housing shortage in Britain. Because of the flight by city dwellers to weekend bungalows or caravans, demand has increased for bigger, swifter cars. But the dream of the rich man, “Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry”, can quickly vanish away as the harsh facts of life cancel out and thwart the plans for present self-satisfaction.

A letter written to a provincial newspaper quite recently was thought-provoking :

“Is it asking too much that our politicians and industrial leaders should now consider the frightening long term consequences of the fuel crisis.

If an industrial society is brought to its knees by a ten per cent cut in oil supplies, as seems likely to be the case in Japan, what is to happen in such societies (of which ours is an example) when fuels are limited for natural reasons ? —Unless each country achieves complete self-support before organic fuel supplies dry up we will be faced with no less than the collapse of civilisation—.”

In the short term, Europe, to a greater degree, and America less, is threatened by the Arab economic blackmail to withhold oil unless

the demands of the Arabs are acceded to. Britain has tried to appease, so have other countries of the E.E.C. except Holland, who has not hidden her sympathies for the Jews. But at the time of writing the energy situation is deteriorating. The most recent headlines state "Fears of new oil cuts grow." "Petrol Fears." America's "fuel cuts blow". Such news must cast a cloud upon the "weekend expeditioners", especially if the weekend retreat is off the beaten track, which hitherto has been regarded as the more desirable of acquisitions. The large car, high power engine enthusiasts likewise, will find such news discomfoting. Americans, it has been said, will have to put up with less weekend motoring, cooler homes, fewer airline trips. The President has announced a fifteen per cent cut in heating oil for homes and a twenty five per cent cut to offices and ten per cent to industry. Petrol sales to be banned on Saturday nights and all day Sunday. Cars to be limited to 50 m.p.h. and lorries to 55 m.p.h. In addition to a present ten per cent jet fuel cut, supplies are to be reduced by another five per cent, with a further fifteen per cent cut to domestic and international airlines from January. But this is only the start. More sacrifices will be needed soon to deal with the energy crisis according to one report.

It seems but a short while ago when an announcement was made that there would be a cut-price war amongst petrol firms and filling stations. How quickly a situation can alter ! The reverse has come with surprising suddenness, but helps to impress the mind in corroborating the truth of what has been divinely declared that "There shall be famines . . . these are the beginnings of sorrows."

In Britain the situation is aggravated by trouble in a declining coal industry, which has been allowed to run down, because of the blind policy of regarding oil as a much more economic proposition for heating and energy. The British Railways transformed its locomotion and greatly contracted itself under the guise of streamlining. So giving way to the great road juggernauts that use fuel oil so greedily. Oil, it was said would be used for producing electricity also. Oil actually took the place of coal in the Gas Industry, through a new method, called the Stretford process, which could convert oil into gas. A new industry, the plastics industry, grew out of the increasing use of oil. This theme could be expanded, but perhaps enough has been said.

Suddenly there is a threat of oil famine ; triggered or highlighted by a conflict in an area which, except for oil, is of no great importance to the Industrial world. How significant ! Especially in the light of the importance with which the Scriptures of God regard such a corner of the earth.

How precarious the economy of the nations really is ! Electric power cuts are threatened in Britain because the Power workers are refusing overtime working. Emergency legislation has been brought into force to reduce consumption of electricity, the power workers being blamed for this . . . But is this the whole of the story ? News is to hand that Belgium has announced measures which will mean a cut in the electricity supply. Spain has appealed to its citizens to make a "voluntary" effort to limit the use of domestic electricity with the possibility of compulsory measures to follow. As far as can be ascertained the Electricity workers in those countries have not been acting like their British counterparts. Such news does provoke the thought that Britain's power difficulties are perhaps not completely due to the non-cooperation of the Electric Power Workers.

It is rather significant that Britain who let Israel down in the recent Middle East conflict in withholding supplies she had contracted to send to Israel, is now suffering from a shortage which she tried to avoid by a change of policy. She certainly received as a result of Arab orientated measures the "favoured nation" description from oil-exporting Arab countries. So Britain pinned its faith on Arab promises. But even the oil-producing countries have their limitations. It turns out that oil-production is somewhat different from oil distribution, Nigerian oil, uninvolved in the Middle East crisis, appears to have now been diverted by the oil companies from Britain to Holland and Germany. So at the time of writing, petrol rationing books are being issued. Britain is the first of the E.E.C. countries to do this. News is also to hand that after running the railways down, Britain is now to spend about 900 million pounds in the next five years on building the railways up again, while the road-building programme will be cut sharply.

But it is not just a question of shortage of oil and power. There seems to be a shortage of many other commodities, and also difficulties of labour supply. People are complaining of being unable to get service, and having to wait a long time before goods they have ordered and paid for, are delivered. Suddenly there is a world shortage of many things, and food is also not as plentiful, even for richer countries, hence the inflationary spiral in food prices. But in poorer countries such as Ethiopia and the Indian sub-continent the situation is disastrous.

These things are the beginnings of sorrows. There is no security for the world. Nothing is certain, and ambitious plans come adrift. Only one thing can be relied upon and that is the purpose of God which will work out in the way He has declared. Hence the Scriptures are as sure as a rock amidst all the roaring waves that prevail. "There shall be famines and troubles", but those who hope in His

mercies can look beyond these things to that time of deliverance which God has promised for His people, a time heralded by such things as present economic crisis, and shortages.

D.L.



## Correspondence

*Letter from C. H. Swinbourne, Brisbane, Australia :*

“Referring to the Remnant of Christ’s Ecclesia Magazine, August, 1973 pages 146-147 you quote from Dr. Thomas in your sub-heading.

### “CONFEDERATE CHRISTADELPHIA”

Commenting on the above controversy, and urging R. Roberts to take action, Dr. Thomas said :

“I, for one, know no one in the warfare as a brother . . .”  
Continued on page 147.

May I ask where you make these quotations from--please.  
May I be favoured with an early reply.”

### *Reply*

The above quotation is taken from the Autobiography of R. Roberts, p. 261.

Perhaps giving the context and background will be helpful.

Trouble had arisen in the Edinburgh Ecclesia with which R. Roberts had great affinity. One, George Dowie, adopted a lax attitude towards certain matters. The main heresy was a flouting of the doctrine of fellowship. While professing the Truth, some members advocated the retention of one advocating the doctrine of eternal torments. Another said : “I have never heard, or had paid attention to the fact that men do not possess immortal souls until I had been a considerable time in the church (ecclesia), and now I think that I have been engaged either more or less at the immersion of every one in Dundee since I cast in my lot amongst them, and *never* has their opinion been asked on this subject . . . We allow great liberty of conscience in such matters *which are not essential.*” From the foregoing it is evident that departure from the Truth so recently established, had taken place. What was to be done ? R. Roberts was only twenty-six and inexperienced, and with relations in the Edinburgh Ecclesia tended to overlook the need for immediate and drastic action. Dr. Thomas knew otherwise : that a little leaven (and there was more than a little as will be perceived) would leaven the whole, if allowed to remain, hence his urging and condemnation of R. Roberts, which for a time produced strained relations. So much so that a son born at the time to R. Roberts



who should have been named John Thomas Roberts, was given the name of Edward August.

There was a crisis, which must always be faced with courage and conviction. Dr. Thomas wrote to R. Roberts in this strain :

“They (these men, Dowieites) acknowledge so much of the truth as to give currency to the thinking of their unenlightened brains with the ignorant and weak. What they acknowledge is the gilding of the base metal of their currency ; from which the genuine ring of the gold cannot be struck out . . .

When I perceive that these “heavenly things” are made only a vehicle for “earthly things” of the most “sensual and demonial” description, I am both chagrined and mortified.”

It was in this alarming situation that Dr. Thomas urged action. Unlike the Advocate who will allow heretics to remain, and Central, who according to H. A. Whittaker disagrees with “Block Disfellowship”. Supposing this policy had been followed in 1865. *The Truth* would undoubtedly have been lost.

R. Roberts needed to be jolted into action. Dr. Thomas did exactly this when he wrote :

“He that is not with us is against us ; and he that gathereth not with us scattereth abroad.

I, FOR ONE, KNOW NO ONE IN THIS WARFARE AS A BROTHER AND FRIEND, WHO IS NEUTRAL OR NOT GATHERING.”

“They may virtually acquiesce in the theory of the truth, but can we call them friends and brethren ? are they Christ’s brethren ? How can they be, seeing Christ is the truth ?

R. Roberts saw what was necessary and against the deep feelings he had for his Scottish relations took action. The Ecclesia in Birmingham withdrew (en block) on Sunday, 6th May, 1866.

#### THE OLD PATHS

We have been asked the position of this group. They seceded from Central in 1957 when Central re-united with Suffolk St. but never have acknowledged their failure in fellowshipping the heresies of the 1923 Division, which included service in the Police Force, and in America “clean flesh”, and more particularly the *denial of the doctrine of fellowship*. They view all Christadelphians as “brethren !” with the hope of salvation this promises. How different from the vigorous, clear-cut attitude of Dr. Thomas, without which the newly-discovered Truth would not have been preserved.

Dr. Thomas's scriptural action produced a lasting effect on R. Roberts, seen in his denunciation of the Dowieites published in "The Ambassador", January, 1867.

"It makes a profession of the Truth, but covertly gives it the lie. It kisses with the mouth, and with hand stabs it to death. In words it protests friendship and agreement, but in actual working makes greater havoc than the adversary. Dowieism comes sneaking over the ramparts, utters the password, which it has filched from an unwary sentinel, and passing current in the camp, whispers sedition and disaffection, divides the counsels, distracts the purposes, and weakens the hands of those who are fighting for the King, by insinuating that it is a pity to make such a fuss against the people of *Satan's dominion* ; they are nice people ; wouldn't it be better to stop the onslaught upon them ; cease this relentless firing, undo the gates ; stop the war ; be friendly ; you can keep your guns, mounted of course, and fly your own flag ; we prefer the Christadelphian flag ourselves ; but other people have their flags, and speak fairly of our Captain, let us be at peace with them."

#### OUR POSITION

We claim to uphold the *original* doctrines of the Christadelphians ; and this includes the all-important *doctrine of fellowship*.

This was expressed by the one who did so much to help the brethren during the First World War, and who became the leader of the Bereans, later the Dawn.

"When I embraced The Truth in 1875 there was, to my knowledge but one community holding those First Principles as a Basis of Fellowship. That community was known as "Christadelphian", then a despised, albeit, a happy united little flock. In those far-off days, to withdraw, or to be withdrawn from that community whose Headquarters were in Birmingham, was in the mind of the writer, to be outside the One Body of Christ !"

#### THIS IS STILL OUR BELIEF, OUR POSITION

The writer of the above says he later changed his mind taking "a wider view than I did in 1875."

We have not changed. The scriptural doctrine of fellowship

forbids such an unwarranted change, however charitable and kindly it might seem to those in other sects. To open the gate to other sects will please the many, but it is only the gate to the "broad way which leadeth to destruction."

W.V.B.



## News from the Ecclesias

*EDEN, NEW YORK* : Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays : Breaking of Bread 11-30 a.m. Sunday School 1-30 p.m. Bible Class : Midweek, Forestville, Buffalo, Hamburg and Orchard Park. Alternative week : Revelation Study.

As the evil, the violence, the dishonesty in the world around us continues to increase, it makes us realize how near His return could be. It makes us fear lest we lack in any way and pray that help may be given to be shown what He requires of us before that day. It is a time for drawing closer to one another and to Him for the needs are great.

J. A. DeF.

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*"PENTRIP"*, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread : Sundays, 11-30 a.m.  
Bible Class : Mid-week.

During the first week in November it was the privilege of one to attend the Meetings in Manchester. The Bible Class and then three meetings on the Sunday. This opportunity was greatly appreciated.

Here now at the end of the month we are able to look upon the mountains white with snow for miles showing His mighty power for He says in Job 37 and 38 "Be thou on the earth—and hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow."

This and the reading of the miracles in Acts at the present time—helps us to value the grace which has been bestowed upon us.

per D.L.

*MANCHESTER* : Memorial Hall, M.A.P.S. Building, Albert Square, Manchester.

Sundays : Break'ng of Bread 11-30 a.m. Lectures on the first Sunday in the month. Wednesday : Bible Class 7-15 p.m. Milton Hall, Deansgate.

The Lecture for January is entitled : "Can the World put itself Right? Without God who does many wonderful works to the children of men?"

Interesting talks, some promising, are taking place with three who appear genuinely to be seeking. In addition progress seems to be maintained with our young ones who are now grown up. This is some relief and encouragement to the work of purging out the "leaven". In this connection withdrawal has regrettably been necessary from Bro. R. A. Pulman and Sis. L. Pulman.

W.V.B.

